

June 15, 2009

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, with this resolution, the House of Representatives acknowledges the tragedy that occurred at ConAgra on June 9, 2009, and extends our sympathies to the people of Garner, North Carolina, and to all of those who were touched by this tragedy. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. *Etheridge*) for introducing this important resolution about such a sad tragedy.

Shortly before 11:30 a.m. on June 9, last Tuesday, a massive explosion ripped through the ConAgra plant in North Carolina while about 300 employees were working. The explosion killed three employees and injured at least 38 others. Three of the responding firefighters were also treated for chemical inhalation.

We wish we could turn back the hands of time and prevent this terrible tragedy. Unfortunately, we can't. And, instead, we need to do all we can to understand the cause of the explosion so we can minimize the risk of explosions like it.

This past weekend, the ATF response team announced that the explosion was caused by a natural gas leak in a room that housed vacuum pumps used for sealing snacks.

According to news reports, the ATF has not found any evidence of criminal activity. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the U.S. Chemical Safety Board, along with others, will continue with the investigation.

We express our deepest condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of the victims of this tragedy. We honor three employees who lost their lives in the explosion, Barbara McLean Spears of Dunn, North Carolina, Louis Junior Watson of Clayton, North Carolina, Rachel Mae Poston Pulley, of Clayton, North Carolina; and we also honor those who suffered injuries.

And, finally, we commend the heroic actions of the first responders, the Garner Police and Fire

Departments, the emergency medical personnel, the North Carolina Task Force 8 Urban Search and Rescue, the ATF, and all other emergency services personnel and private citizens who came to the rescue. Their efforts, along with those of the ConAgra employees themselves, no doubt prevented further loss of life and injuries.

I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution